

A History of Indian Buddhism: From Sakyamuni to Early Mahayana.

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PART TWO

NIKĀYA
BUDDHISM

CHAPTER 8

The Development of Nikāya Buddhism

THE TERM “Nikāya Buddhism”¹ refers to monastic Buddhism after the initial schism into the Mahāsaṅghika and Sthavira schools had occurred. It must be remembered, however, that other groups of Buddhists existed at this time. For example, Buddhist laymen were not included in the Buddhist *saṅgha*, but were very active during and after the Buddha’s life. Immediately after the Buddha’s death, laymen divided his remains (*śarīra*) into eight parts and constructed burial mounds (*stūpas*) for them. These *stūpas* were constructed at the intersections of major roads (*DN*, vol. 2, p. 142) where large groups of people could assemble, not at the monasteries where monks lived. *Stūpas* were administered by laymen who were autonomous from the order of monks, and most of the devotees were also laymen. According to the *A-yü-wang ching* (*T* 2043, *Aśokarājasūtra?*), a biography of King Aśoka, the king ordered that the eight *stūpas* be opened and the relics divided and distributed throughout the country, where they were to be the basis of new *stūpas*. In part, Aśoka was responding to the growing popularity of *stūpa* worship. In addition to the sites of the old *stūpas*, four great pilgrimage sites had been established and were frequently visited by believers: the Buddha’s birthplace, the tree under which he attained enlightenment, the park where he preached his first sermon, and the place where he died. Unfortunately, however, literary sources do not describe in any detail the beliefs or doctrines held by these groups of lay believers, although they obviously congregated around *stūpas* to praise the Buddha and strengthen their faith in him.

Although the activities of these groups of lay believers later came to play an important role in the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism, the main-

stream of Early Buddhism was continued not by such lay groups, but by the schools of Nikāya Buddhism. The Buddha's main teachings were transmitted by his immediate disciples such as Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda (Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana had predeceased the Buddha) to their disciples, and then were eventually passed on to the monks of Nikāya Buddhism.

Nikāya Buddhism was often called "Buddhism for disciples" or "Buddhism of those who studied." It did not stress the importance of teaching others. Because Nikāya Buddhism seemed so passive to Mahāyāna Buddhists, they called it Śrāvakayāna (the vehicle of the *śrāvakas*). The term "*śrāvaka*" meant "those who listened to the Buddha's words," and thus referred to his disciples. Originally, lay people were also called *śrāvakas*, but by the time of Nikāya Buddhism the term seems to have been limited to those who had been ordained.

Nikāya Buddhist doctrine was a monastic teaching for those who were willing to leave their homes to become monks or nuns, strictly observe the precepts, and perform religious practices. Both doctrinal study and religious practice presupposed the abandonment of a person's life as a householder. A strict line separated those who had been ordained from lay people. In addition, Nikāya Buddhism was for those who were secluded in their monasteries. While in retreat, they led ascetic lives and devoted themselves to scholarship and religious practices. It was not a Buddhism of the streets, dedicated to saving others; rather, the emphasis was on the completion of a person's own practice. Consequently, Mahāyāna Buddhists deprecated Nikāya Buddhism by calling it Hīnayāna (small vehicle), meaning it had a narrow or inferior teaching.

Since their monasteries were often wealthy, Nikāya Buddhists did not have to trouble themselves about living expenses and were able to devote most of their time to religious practices. Their orders often received the devotion and financial help of kings, queens, and merchants, who gave large estates to the monasteries. King Kaniṣka was particularly famous for his support of the Sarvāstivādin School; but according to inscriptions, even before Kaniṣka, a North Indian governor-general (*mahākṣatrapa*) named Kusuluka and a governor (*kṣatrapa*) named Patika gave land to the order. In South India, the queens and royal families of the Āndhran dynasty supported the Buddhist orders. Many inscriptions survive recording their gifts of land. Many other inscriptions dating from the second century B.C.E. to the fifth century C.E. record gifts of cave-temples and land to *stūpas* and to the Buddhist order as a whole. According to these inscriptions, orders belonging to more than twenty schools existed during this period.

In addition to receiving support from royalty, Buddhist orders were aided by the merchant classes. Merchants traded with foreign countries and distant cities, traveling across deserts and through dark forests in caravans or crossing the sea to reach their destination. To overcome the difficulties and dangers that they encountered on their travels, merchants had to be brave, patient, and capable of making calm and rational decisions. The rational qualities of Buddhism matched the needs of such people. In addition, when merchants traveled to foreign countries, they had to be able to associate freely with peoples of different nationalities and social classes. The strict caste system of Hinduism made it an inappropriate religion for such merchants. (Farmers, in contrast, were strongly tied to Hinduism.) Since Buddhism did not recognize the caste system, it was especially attractive to merchants.

Merchants were interested not only in the schools of Nikāya Buddhism, but also in the Mahāyāna orders. Among the rich merchants and leaders of merchant classes (*śreṣṭhin*) were Ugra and Sudatta, a convert of the Buddha who was known for the alms he gave to orphans and the needy. The names of many other merchant leaders who were early Buddhist believers are known from early Buddhist sources. Merchant leaders were often portrayed as being in the audiences in Mahāyāna scriptures. Such people probably also gave alms to the Nikāya Buddhist orders. With aid from both kings and merchant leaders, the members of the Nikāya Buddhist orders could devote themselves to their scholarship and practice. The analytical and highly detailed *abhidharma* systems of Buddhist doctrine were formulated in such monasteries.

The Second and Third Councils

In chapter six we analyzed the story of how a dispute over ten items of monastic discipline led to an assembly of elders at Vaiśālī. According to the Chapter on the Council of Seven Hundred of the Pāli *Vinaya*, seven hundred elders discussed the ten items in accordance with the *vinaya*. Thus, their meeting is called a council on *vinaya* (*vinayasāṅgīti*). No mention is made in the Pāli *Vinaya* of the compilation of the *Sūtra-piṭaka* or *Vinaya-piṭaka* after the investigation of the ten points was concluded. The Chinese translations of the full *vinayas* agree with this account. Although the chapter titles of the Chinese *vinayas* on the council suggest that the *vinaya* was recited and compiled again, within the chapters themselves no mention is made of a reorganization of the *Vinaya*- or *Sūtra-piṭaka*. In contrast, according to the Sri Lankan chronicles, the *Dīpavaṃsa* and *Mahāvamsa*, after the dispute over the ten items was con-

cluded, the seven hundred elders with Revata as their leader held a council on doctrine (*dhamma-saṅgaha*) that required eight months to complete. This is called the Second Council (*dutiya-saṅgaha*) in the Theravāda tradition.

The *Dīpavaṃsa* account continues, adding that the dissenting monks who were expelled from the order then gathered ten thousand supporters and held their own council to compile the Buddha's teachings. This was called the Great Council (*Mahāsaṅgīti*). These monks were said to have compiled false teachings, rejected the canon agreed upon at the First Council, and compiled their own canon. They moved *sūtras* from one part of the canon to another, thereby distorting the doctrines of the five *Nikāyas*. They confused orthodox and heterodox teachings and did not distinguish between teachings to be taken literally and those requiring interpretations. They discarded parts of the *sūtras* and the *vinaya* and composed false scriptures, which they substituted for the rejected texts.

According to the *Dīpavaṃsa* account, the monks of the Great Assembly compiled new versions of the *sūtras* and *vinaya* quite different from those of the Sthaviras. This group is called "the monks of the Great Council" (*Mahāsaṅgītika*) in the *Dīpavaṃsa* and "the Great Assembly" (*Mahāsaṅghika*) in the *Mahāvamsa*. The name "Mahāsaṅghika" meant that these monks constituted the majority of monks at the initial schism. Thus, according to the Sri Lankan tradition, after the initial schism the Theravāda and Mahāsaṅghika schools each held a separate council.

No mention of a council is found in the *I pu tsung lun lun* (*T* 2031, *Samayabhedoparacanacakra*#, hereafter referred to as *Samaya*), a history and discussion of the schools of Nikāya Buddhism according to Northern Buddhist traditions. According to the *Samaya*, a hundred years after the Buddha's death, during the reign of King Aśoka, "four groups could not reach agreement in discussions about the five points of doctrine proposed by Mahādeva" (*T* 49:15a). Consequently, the Buddhist order was divided into two schools, the Sthavira and the Mahāsaṅghika. The four groups were the Nāga group (Tib. Gnas-bstan-klu), the group from the border area (Tib. Śar-phogs-pa), the learned group (Tib. Mañ-du-thos-pa), and the venerable group. (Only three groups are mentioned in the Tibetan translation, but four groups are mentioned in a Chinese translation, *T* 49:20a.)

Vinayas from both the Mahāsaṅghika and the Sthavira lineages agreed that a council of seven hundred monks was convened to discuss ten points of controversy. (However, the ten points are not specifically mentioned in the *Mo-ho-seng-ch'i lü*, *T* 1425, *Mahāsaṅghikavinaya*?.) Thus, there is agreement that a council was convened, but only Theravāda sources such as the *Dīpavaṃsa* include statements that the

Sūtra-piṭaka was recited and examined after the council. This series of events is generally referred to as the Second Council, but sources do not agree about whether the *Vinaya*- and *Sūtra-piṭakas* were reorganized at this time. Since sources do agree that seven hundred monks did assemble and convene a council, at least this aspect of the tradition must be recognized as a historical fact.

The story of the Third Council is found only in Sri Lankan sources such as the *Dīpavaṃsa*, *Mahāvamsa*, and *Samantapāsādikā*. According to these sources, the Second Council was held a hundred years after the Buddha's death during the reign of King Kālāśoka; the Third Council (*tatiya-saṅgaha*) was held during the reign of King Aśoka, who was crowned 218 years after the Buddha's death. The Third Council is said to have been presided over by Moggaliputta Tissa, and the doctrines discussed at the council to have been recorded in the *Kathāvatthu* (Points of Controversy). The Sri Lankan tradition thus distinguishes between the reigns of Kālāśoka (P. Kālāsoka) and Aśoka (P. Asoka) and relates the story of two councils. In contrast, in the *Samaya* (T 49:18a), a work in the Northern tradition, King Aśoka's reign is said to have occurred a little more than a century after the Buddha's death. This latter time scale does not allow sufficient time for a Third Council to have been convened. Moreover, the work in which the disputes of the Third Council are said to have been collected, the *Kathāvatthu*, is found only in the Theravāda tradition. The Third Council is not mentioned in the literature of the other schools. Thus, if it was held, it apparently involved only the Theravāda School.

The Sri Lankan account of the Third Council follows. During the reign of King Aśoka, the Buddhist order flourished because of the king's financial support, but many people became monks only because monasteries offered an easy way of life (*theyyasamvāsaka*). Monastic rules were not closely observed and religious practice was neglected. Disputes arose in the order. Not even the fortnightly assembly was held. To correct such abuses, Moggaliputta Tissa with the support of King Aśoka purged the order. Those who agreed that Buddhism was *vibhajjavāda* (the teaching of discrimination) were accepted as Buddhist monks; those who disagreed were expelled from the order. Moggaliputta Tissa then compiled the *Kathāvatthu* to explain the orthodox position, assembled a thousand *arhats*, and held a council to compile the Dharma. This was the Third Council.

The Sri Lankan Theravāda School understood Buddhism as the "teaching of discrimination" (*vibhajjavāda*). Nothing was to be adhered to in a one-sided manner. If people single-mindedly insisted that they understood the truth, arguments would inevitably ensue. Thus, reality

was to be understood by “discriminating” between one-sided negative and positive positions. The Theravāda School was also called the Vibhajjavādin (those who discriminate) School. The Third Council was probably held at some point within the Theravāda School and focused on this tradition of discriminating between extremes. Thus, the historicity of the Third Council cannot be completely denied.

The contents of the *Kathāvatthu* are based on points of controversy that arose among the various schools of Nikāya Buddhism. The text thus presupposes the completion of the various schisms of the schools. The present text of the *Kathāvatthu* must be dated at least one hundred years after Aśoka, perhaps during the last half of the second century B.C.E. If the text of the *Kathāvatthu* accurately reflects the issues of the Third Council, then that council must have occurred in the second century B.C.E.

Later Schisms

After the initial split that resulted in the Sthavira and Mahāsaṅghika schools, further divisions occurred that led to a proliferation of schools. The Mahāsaṅghika School was the first to experience a schism, probably because it had more members and had adopted a more liberal attitude toward doctrinal issues. As a result, it was more difficult to administer than the Sthavira School. According to the *Samaya* (T 2031), three additional schools—the Ekakvyavahārika, Lokottaravādin, and Kaukuṭika—split off from the Mahāsaṅghika during the second century after the Buddha’s death. Two more schisms, which occurred during the second century after the Buddha’s death, resulted in the Bahuśrutīya and the Prajñāptivādin schools. At the end of that century, Mahādeva proclaimed his five points at a *caitya* (reliquary) in southern India. The arguments that arose concerning the five points resulted in a fourth schism and three new schools: the Caitika, Aparāśaila, and Uttaraśaila. Thus, a total of eight new schools arose out of the Mahāsaṅghika School during the second century after the Buddha’s death.

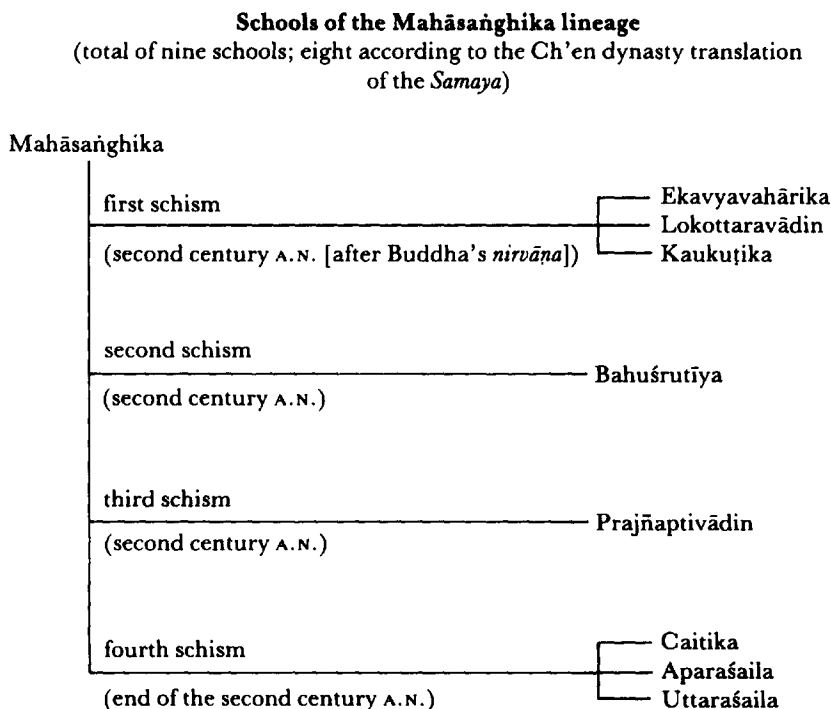
According to the *Samaya*, the Sthaviras maintained their unity during the century when the schools of the Mahāsaṅghika lineage were undergoing schisms. However, divisions in the Sthavira lineage began occurring during the third century after the Buddha’s death. First, the Sarvāstivādin (also known as the Hetuvāda) School split away from the Sthavira (or Haimavata) School. Next, the Vātsīputrīya School broke away from the Sarvāstivādin School. The Vātsīputrīya School subsequently gave rise to four more schools: the Dharmottarīya, Bhadrāyā-

nīya, Sammatīya, and Śaṇṇagarika. In a fourth schism, the Sarvāstivādin School gave rise to the Mahīśāsaka School, which in turn, in a fifth schism, led to the formation of the Dharmaguptaka School. The Dharmaguptaka School claimed that its teachings had been received from the Buddha's disciple Maudgalyāyana. In a sixth schism, the Kāśyapīya (or Suvarṣaka) School broke away from the Sarvāstivādin School. The above six schisms occurred during the third century after the Buddha's death. The seventh, in which the Sautrāntika (or Saṅkrāntika) School broke away from the Sarvāstivādin School, occurred during the fourth century after the Buddha's death. The Sautrāntika School emphasized the importance of *sūtras* over *śāstras* and claimed that its teachings originated with Ānanda, the monk who had chanted the *sūtras* at the First Council.

The Sthavira lineage underwent seven schisms that resulted in eleven schools, while the Mahāsaṅghika School divided into a total of nine schools. The schisms in the two original schools thus resulted in a total of twenty schools. The phrase "the schisms into the eighteen schools," which is found in a number of Buddhist texts, refers to the eighteen schools produced by these later schisms, but not to the two original schools.

The Mahāsaṅghika School continued to exist as a separate entity despite undergoing four schisms. The fate of the original school of the Sthaviras is not so clear. The first schism in the Sthavira lineage resulted in the Sarvāstivādin and Haimavata schools. Although the Haimavata School is called the "original Sthavira School" in the *Samaya*, the Haimavata School was influential only in an area in the north and was far from central India, where most of the important events in very early Buddhist history occurred. Moreover, the school does not seem to have been very powerful. The other schools in the Sthavira lineage split off from the Sarvāstivādin School. Consequently, the account found in the *Samaya* seems questionable. Vasumitra, the author, was a Sarvāstivādin monk, and may have written this account to demonstrate that the Sarvāstivādin School was the most important school among those in the Sarvāstivādin lineage. Vasumitra's overall position thus would seem to conflict with his statement that the Haimavata was the original Sthavira School.

The early schisms of the Sthavira lineage occurred during the third century after the Buddha's death. According to Ui Hakuju's theory, the Buddha died in 386 B.C.E. (or 383 B.C.E. according to Nakamura Hajime), 116 years before Aśoka's coronation. If Ui's dates are used, then the Mahāsaṅghika schisms would have occurred during the third century B.C.E. and the Sthavira schisms during the second and first cen-

Figure 2. The Schools of Nikāya Buddhism according to the *Samaya*

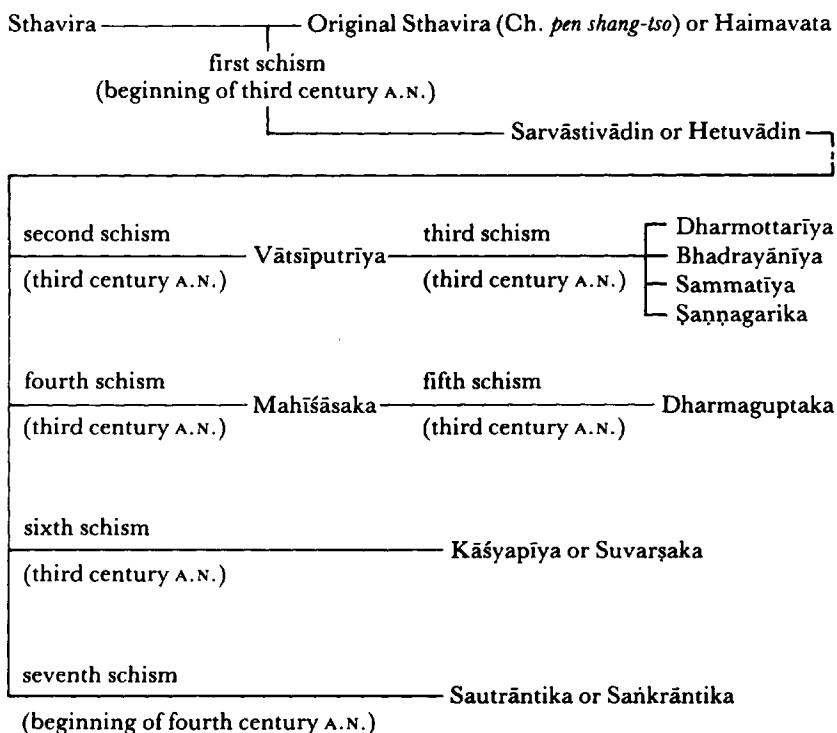
turies B.C.E. The Sautrāntika School would have come into existence by the first century B.C.E.²

If the Sri Lankan chronicles are followed, however, then the Buddha's death is placed in 484 B.C.E. (according to Jacobi and Kanakura Enshō), 218 years before Aśoka's coronation. Thus the Mahāsaṅghika schisms would have occurred before Aśoka's time and the Sthavira schisms during the century after Aśoka. Figure 2 illustrates the schisms according to Hsüan-tsang's translation of the *Samaya* (T 2031).

The account of the schisms presented in the Sri Lankan chronicles, the *Dīpavaṃsa* and *Mahāvāṃsa*, differs substantially from the description found in the *Samaya*. According to the Sri Lankan chronicles, the schisms in both the Mahāsaṅghika and Theravāda (Sthavira) lineages all occurred during the second century after the Buddha's death. Since the Sri Lankan chronicles state that Aśoka became king 218 years after the Buddha's death, the schisms presumably would have been com-

Schools of the Sthavira lineage

(total of eleven schools; the original Sthavira and Haimavata schools are distinguished in the Ch'in translation, making a total of twelve)



pleted before Aśoka ascended the throne. Aśoka would thus have reigned during the height of sectarian Buddhism. The Aśokan edicts, however, give little evidence that Aśoka ruled during a period when Buddhism was fiercely sectarian.

According to the *Dīpavaṃsa* and *Mahāvāṃsa*, the first schism occurred when the Mahāsaṅghika (Mahāsaṅgītika or Mahāsaṅghika Vajjiputtaka) School gave rise to the Gokulika (called the Kaukuṭika in the *Samaya*; the *Samaya* equivalent is given in parentheses for the next few paragraphs) and the Ekavyohārika (Ekavyavahārika) schools. In a second schism, the Paññati (Prajñaptivādin) and Bahussutaka (Bahusru-

tīya) schools broke away from the Gokulika School. (According to the *Samaya*, all four of the above schools split away from the Mahāsaṅghika School.) Next, the Cetiyavāda (Caitika) School arose. According to the *Dīpavaṃsa*, it broke away from the Mahāsaṅghika School; but in the *Mahāvāṃsa*, it is said to have arisen from the Paññati and Bahussutaka schools. A total of six schools (including the Mahāsaṅghika) is mentioned in this series of schisms.

The later schisms in the schools of the Theravāda (Sthavira) lineage begin with the formation of the Mahīṃsāsaka (Mahīśāsaka) and Vajjiputtaka (Vātsīputrīya) schools out of the Theravāda School. Next, four schools—the Dhammutariya (Dharmottariya), Bhadrāyānika (Bhadrāyāṇīya), Chandāgārika (Ṣaṇṇagarika), and Saṃmitiya (Sammatiya)—arose out of the Vajjiputtaka School. The Sabbatthavāda (Sarvāstivāda) and Dhammaguttika (Dharmaguptaka) schools were then formed out of the Mahīṃsāsaka (Mahīśāsaka) School. (The *Samaya*, on the other hand, maintains that both the Mahīśāsaka and the Vātsīputrīya arose from the Sarvāstivāda.) Thus, the Sarvāstivādin School is portrayed as one of the oldest schools in the *Samaya*, but as a more recent school in the Sri Lankan chronicles. In both traditions, the Vātsīputrīya is said to have been the source for four later schools including the Sammatiya and Dharmottariya. Finally, according to the Sri Lankan chronicles, the Sabbatthavāda gave rise to the Kassapiya (Kāśyapīya) School, which in turn gave rise to the Saṅkantika (Saṅkrāntika) School. The Suttavāda (Sautrāntika) School later broke away from the Saṅkrāntika. (In the *Samaya* the last three schools are said to have split away from the Sarvāstivādin School.)

In the above account, the Theravāda and other schools of its lineage total twelve. When these twelve are added to the six schools from the Mahāsaṅghika lineage, they total eighteen schools. The frequent mention of “eighteen schools” in various sources probably indicates that at one time eighteen schools did, in fact, exist. According to the Sri Lankan chronicles, the eighteen schools were formed during the second century after the Buddha’s death. Other schools appeared later, however. The *Dīpavaṃsa* lists the following six schools without identifying the schools from which they arose: Hemavatika (Haimavata), Rājagiriya, Siddhatthaka, Pubbaseliya, Aparaseliya (Aparaśaila), and Apararājagiriya. In the *Samaya*, the Haimavata is identified with the Sthavira School formed at the time of the initial schism, and is thus one of the oldest schools. In the *Mahāvāṃsa*, in contrast, it is listed as a later school. The Aparaseliya School is included in the schools that developed out of the Mahāsaṅghika School, according to the *Samaya*. In Buddhaghosa’s commentary on the *Kathavāṭṭhu*, four schools are called “Andhaka

schools": the Pubbaseliya, Aparaseliya, Rājagiriya, and Siddhatthaka. They seem to have been related to the Mahāsaṅghika School.

In the *Mahāvamsa*'s list of the six later schools, the Apararājagiriya School is replaced by the Vājiriya School. In addition, the Dhammaruci and Sāgaliya schools, which broke away from the Sri Lankan Theravāda School, are also mentioned. The schisms according to the Sri Lankan chronicles are diagramed in Figure 3.

As has been noted, the preceding two accounts of the schisms in the Buddhist orders differ in several important ways. The account of the origins of the Sarvāstivādin School found in the Sri Lankan chronicles is probably correct. The areas of agreement in the accounts presented by the two traditions provide us with at least a general view of the order of the schisms.

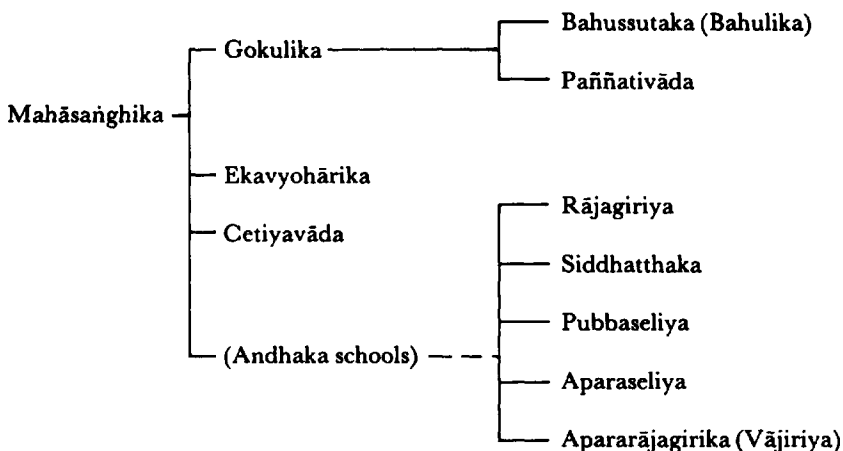
The names of a number of schools not found in the above two accounts are known. André Bareau has compiled the names of thirty-four schools from literary sources and from inscriptions recording gifts made to various orders. Below is a list of schools that follows the spelling given by Bareau.³

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Mahāsaṅghika | 20. Sarvāstivādin |
| 2. Lokottaravādin | Vaibhāṣika |
| 3. Ekavyāvahārika | 21. Mūlasarvāstivādin |
| 4. Gokulika | 22. Sautrāntika |
| or Kukkuṭika | or Saṅkrāntivādin |
| 5. Bahuśrutīya | 23. Dāṛṣṭāntika |
| 6. Prajñāptivādin | 24. Vibhajjavādin (Sri |
| 7. Caitīya | Lankan Theravāda School) |
| or Caitika | 25. Mahīśāsaka |
| 8. Andhaka | 26. Dharmaguptaka |
| 9. Pūrvaśāila | 27. Kāśyāpiya |
| or Uttaraśāila | or Suvarṣaka |
| 10. Aparāśāila | 28. Tāmraśātiya |
| 11. Rājagiriya | (Sri Lankan School) |
| 12. Siddhārthika | 29. Mahāvihāra Sect of the |
| 13. Sthavira | Theravādin School |
| 14. Haimavata | 30. Abhayagirivāsini |
| 15. Vātsīputrīya | or Dhammarucika |
| 16. Sammatīya | 31. Jetavanīya |
| 17. Dharmottarīya | or Sāgalika |
| 18. Bhadrāyānīya | 32. Hetuvādin |
| 19. Śaṇṇagarika | 33. Uttarāpathaka |
| or Śaṇḍagiriya | 34. Vetullaka |

Figure 3. Schools of Nikāya Buddhism according to Theravāda Sources

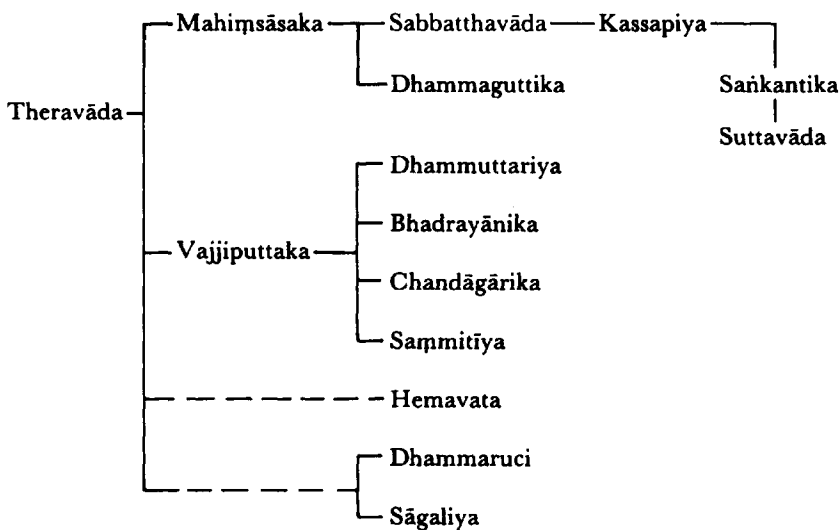
Schools of the Mahāsaṅghika lineage

(relation of traditional six schools indicated by solid lines; dotted lines indicate additional schisms)



Schools of the Theravāda lineage

(relation of traditional twelve schools indicated by solid lines; dotted lines indicate additional schisms)



Sources for the Study of the Schisms

In the Sri Lankan tradition, the major sources for the study of the schisms are such works as the *Dīpavaṃsa*, the *Mahāvāṃsa*, and Buddhaghosa's *Kathāvatthu-aṭṭhakathā*. A key source in the Sarvāstivādin tradition, Vasumitra's *Samayabhedoparacanacakra* (cited as *Samaya*), survives in three Chinese translations (*T* 2031–2033) and a Tibetan translation (Peking no. 5639). The above works are the most important sources for the study of the schisms of Nikāya Buddhism. In addition, two Chinese translations of Indian texts, the *Wen-shu-shih-li wen ching* (*T* 468, *Mañ-jusrīparipṛcchā?*) and the *She-li-fu wen ching* (*T* 1465, *Śāriputraparipṛcchā?*), are useful. The sixth part of the third fascicle of Seng-yu's *Ch'u san-ts'ang-chi chi* (*T* 2145) includes a valuable discussion of the schisms that focuses on the positions of the five schools whose full *vinayas* were translated into Chinese. This account was influential in Chinese Buddhism.

The following sources in Tibetan are also important: Bhavya's *Sde-pa tha-dad-par byed-pa dan rnam-par bsad-pa* (Peking no. 5640, *Nikāyabhedavibhaṅga-vyākhyāna*), Vinītadeva's *Gshun tha-dad-pa rim-par klag-pa hi khhor-lo-las sde-pa tha-dad-pa bstan-pa bsdu-pa* (Peking no. 5641, *Samayabhedoparacanacakra nikāya-bhedopadesana-saṅgraha*), and the *Dge-tshul-gyi dan-poñi lo dri-ba* (Peking no. 5634, *Śrāmaṇera-varṣāgra-prccha*).

In Bhavya's *Nikāyabhedavibhaṅga-vyākhyāna* various theories concerning the schisms of Nikāya Buddhism are presented, including accounts from the Sthavira, Mahāsaṅghika, and Sammatīya schools. According to a Sthavira legend, Aśoka ascended the throne 160 years after the Buddha's death. Sammatīya traditions maintained that the initial schism between the Sthavira and Mahāsaṅghika schools occurred 137 years after the Buddha's death. Dissension continued for the next sixty-three years, with the first schisms in the Mahāsaṅghika School occurring during that time. Some modern scholars regard the date of 137 years after the Buddha's death for the initial schism as reliable. Bareau has argued that the account in Vinītadeva's work represents the Mūla-sarvāstivādin position. A number of theories are also presented in Tāranātha's history of Indian Buddhism. However, since the works by Bhavya and others that have survived in the Tibetan tradition were compiled during or after the sixth century, long after the schisms had occurred, their value as historical sources for the schisms is diminished. Other later sources with information on the schisms are the *Mahāvīyut-patti* (entry no. 275) and I-ching's *Nan-hai chi-kuei nei-fa chuan* (*T* 2125, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practiced in India and the Malay Archipelago*).⁴

In most of these works, the initial schism is said to have resulted in the formation of two schools. However, theories also exist that maintain that the initial schism resulted in three (Sthavira, Mahāsaṅghika, and Vibhajjavādin) or four schools (either the Mahāsaṅghika, Sarvāstivādin, Vātsīputriya, and Haimavata schools or the Mahāsaṅghika, Sarvāstivādin, Theravāda, and Sammatīya schools). In the *Mahāvīyutpatti* the four basic schools are listed as the Sarvāstivādin, Sammatīya, Mahāsaṅghika, and Theravāda. I-ching listed the Mahāsaṅghika, Theravāda, Mūlasarvāstivādin, and Sammatīya schools as the four basic schools (*T* 54:205b). However, in some *sūtras* and *śāstras*, a *vinaya* tradition singling out the following five schools for special emphasis is mentioned: Dharmaguptaka, Sarvāstivādin, Kāśyapīya, Mahīśāsaka, and Vātsīputriya (in some lists, the Mahāsaṅghika School replaces the Vātsīputriya). Hsüan-tsang mentioned such a *vinaya* tradition in his travel diary (*T* 51:882b).

To summarize, the first or initial schism resulted in two schools: the Sthavira and the Mahāsaṅghika. After a number of further schisms, four schools emerged as the most powerful ones of their time: the Mahāsaṅghika, Theravāda, Sarvāstivādin, and Sammatīya. Later, the Sammatīya School became particularly strong, as is indicated by the entries in the travel records of Fa-hsien and Hsüan-tsang.

In the discussions of Buddhism found in Brahmanical philosophical texts, the Mahāyāna Mādhyamika and Yogācāra schools and the Nikāya Buddhist Vaibhāṣika (Sarvāstivādin) and Sautrāntika schools are often mentioned. Later, in Śāṅkara's (eighth century) *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya* (II. 2. 18), three schools are discussed: Sarvāstivādin (Sarvāstivādin), Vijñānāstivādin (Yogācāra), and Sarvaśūnyatvavādin (Mādhyamika). According to scholars, the Sautrāntika School was included in the Sarvāstivādin category by Śāṅkara. Later Vedānta thinkers regarded Śāṅkara's philosophy as the high point of Indian philosophy and ranked other schools of thought below it in a hierarchical fashion. For example, in works such as the *Sarvamata-saṅgraha*, *Sarvasiddhanta-saṅgraha* (attributed to Śāṅkara), Mādhava's (fourteenth century) *Sarvadarśana-saṅgraha*, and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's (fifteenth or sixteenth century) *Prasthānabheda*, the materialist Lokāyata tradition is ranked the lowest. Directly above it is Buddhism (Bauddha) and then Jainism. Four traditions are listed under Buddhism: the Mādhyamika, Yogācāra, Sautrāntika, and Vaibhāṣika. Thus the Sautrāntika and Sarvāstivādin schools were viewed as being representative of Hīnayāna Buddhism.

Vedānta scholars probably chose these four schools of Buddhism because they represented a variety of positions and could be presented

in a diagrammatic fashion. The Sarvāstivādin were said to regard the external world as real (*bāhyārtha-pratyakṣatva*). The Sautrāntikas were said to regard the external world as having only an instantaneous existence and thus to have argued that its existence could be recognized only through inference (*bāhyārthānumeyatva*). The Yogācārins were said to recognize only consciousness as existing and to deny the existence of the external world (*bāhyārthasūnyatva*). Finally, the Mādhyamikas claimed that both subject and object were nonsubstantial (*sarvasūnyatva*).

Later Developments in Nikāya Buddhism

Once Buddhism had spread through India during King Aśoka's reign, it continued to develop. In the initial schism between Mahāsaṅghikas and Sthaviras, most of the monks who supported the adoption of the ten items of monastic discipline in dispute had been associated with the Vṛjis (Vajjiputtaka) of Vaiśālī in central India; they had constituted the nucleus of the Mahāsaṅghika order. Consequently, after the schism, the Mahāsaṅghikas became particularly influential in central India.

In contrast, the monks who opposed the ten items had been from Avanti in western India and from along the Southern Route. Consequently, the Sthavira order was more influential in western India. Aśoka's son Mahinda is traditionally credited with introducing Theravāda Buddhism to Sri Lanka. Mahinda's mother was from Vidiśā in Ujjayinī along the Southern Route. Mahinda assembled the materials for his journey in western India and set out from the west coast by ship. The Pāli language closely resembles the language found on inscriptions at Gīrnār. All of this evidence suggests that the Sthavira order was centered in western India.

Sarvāstivādin works lead to similar conclusions concerning the geographical distribution of the two schools. According to fascicle 99 of the *Mahāvibhāṣā* (T 27:510a-512a), the dispute over the five issues that Mahādeva raised occurred during Aśoka's reign. After the Sthavira monks were defeated in the debate by the greater number of Mahāsaṅghika monks and expelled from the Kukkuṭārāma monastery (established in Pāṭaliputra by Aśoka), they went to Kashmir. According to the *A-yü-wang ching* (T 50:155c-156a, *Aśokarājasūtra*?), Upagupta established Buddhism in Mathurā, and Madhyāntika established it in Kashmir. These traditions agree with the fact that Kashmir later became a stronghold of the Sarvāstivādin School. The great wealth the Sarvāstivādins accumulated in Kashmir enabled the school to develop a detailed *abhidharma* philosophy.

Thus, the Sthavira School was influential in the western and northern parts of India, while the Mahāsaṅghika School was dominant in the central and southern parts of India. Many inscriptions concerning the Mahāsaṅghika School have been discovered in southern India. In general, however, the Mahāsaṅghika tradition was weaker than the Sthavira tradition. The names of many schools belonging to the Sthavira tradition, such as the Sarvāstivādin, Theravāda, and Sammatīya, are well known. In contrast, outside of the Mahāsaṅghika School itself, the names of relatively few schools from the Mahāsaṅghika lineage are well known. In addition, many works belonging to schools of the Sthavira tradition have survived, but only the *Mahāvastu*, a biography of the Buddha from the Lokottaravādin School, and two or three other works from schools in the Mahāsaṅghika tradition are extant.

Many of the later schisms in Nikāya Buddhism occurred during the second century B.C.E. The reasons for the schisms are not clear. Nor is it known where most of the "eighteen schools" were located. Although Mahāyāna Buddhism had arisen by the first century B.C.E., Nikāya Buddhism did not decline. Instead, both Nikāya and Mahāyāna Buddhism flourished during the next few centuries. In fact, Nikāya Buddhism was the larger of the two movements.

Many scholars have argued that Mahāyāna Buddhism arose from the Mahāsaṅghika School. The Mahāsaṅghika School was not, however, absorbed by Mahāyāna Buddhism; it continued to exist long after Mahāyāna Buddhism developed. Even during I-ching's (635-713) travels, it was counted among the four most powerful Buddhist orders in India.

There are relatively few materials extant regarding the later development of Nikāya Buddhism. The travel records of Chinese pilgrims to India are particularly valuable in this respect. Fa-hsien left China in 399. In his travel record, the *Fo-kuo chi* (T 2085), he mentioned three classifications of monasteries: Hīnayāna monasteries, Mahāyāna monasteries, and monasteries in which both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna teachings were studied. For example, according to Fa-hsien's diary, three thousand monks in the country of Lo-i (Rohī or Lakki) in North India studied both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna teachings, and three thousand monks in Pa-na (Bannu or Bannū) studied Hīnayāna teachings. Because Fa-hsien's diary is only one fascicle long, the entries are not detailed, but he does indicate that nine countries were Hīnayānist, three were Mahāyānist, and three were both Hīnayānist and Mahāyānist. In addition, he mentioned more than twenty other countries where Buddhism was practiced (although he did not identify the type of Buddhism followed). While Fa-hsien gives us some idea of Buddhism in fifth-century India, he did not record the names of the schools in the

various parts of India he visited. Many aspects of our view of Indian Buddhism at that time must therefore remain vague.

The next significant travel diary was written by Hsüan-tsang (602-664), who left China for India in 629. His travel record, the *Hsi-yu chi* (*T* 2087, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*), is a detailed report of Indian Buddhism in the seventh century. The doctrinal affiliations of ninety-nine areas were recorded. Of these, sixty were Hīnayāna, twenty-four Mahāyāna, and fifteen were places in which both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna teachings were followed. Of the sixty areas where Hīnayāna teachings were followed, fourteen were Sarvāstivādin, nineteen were Sammatīya, two were Theravāda, three were Mahāsaṅghika, one was Lokkotaravādin, five were Mahāyāna-Theravāda, and sixteen were only said to be Hīnayānist with no further information supplied.

The above numbers suggest that in the first half of the seventh century, the Hīnayāna orders were very influential in India. The Sarvāstivādin and Sammatīya schools were especially powerful. The only mentions of schools of the Mahāsaṅghika lineage were the three locations where the Mahāsaṅghika School itself was followed and the single place identified as Lokkotaravādin.

When Hsüan-tsang mentioned five places that followed the Mahāyāna-Theravāda School, he was probably referring to a branch of the Sri Lankan Theravāda School that had adopted many elements of Mahāyāna thought (*T* 51:918b, 929a, 934a, 935c, 936c). In the seventh century, there were two main branches of Sri Lankan Buddhism: the Mahāvihāra-vāsin, which represented the orthodox Theravāda School, traditionally said to have been brought to Sri Lanka by Mahinda; and the Abhayagiri-vihāra-vāsin, which adopted many elements of the Vetulyaka branch of Mahāyāna teachings. When Fa-hsien traveled to Sri Lanka in 410, he reported that five thousand monks belonged to the Abhayagiri-vihāra-vāsin, three thousand to the Mahāvihāra-vāsin, and two thousand to the Cetiyapabbatavihāra. While he was in Sri Lanka, Fa-hsien obtained a number of texts of the Mahīśāsaka School, including its *Vinaya*, *Ch'ang a-han* (corresponding to the Pāli *Dīgha-nikāya*), *Tsa a-han* (corresponding to the Pāli *Khuddaka-nikāya*), and the *Tsa-tsang* (*T* 745, *Kṣudrakaśūtra*). Hsüan-tsang was unable to go to Sri Lanka because of wars on the island during the time he was in India. However, he did note that "the Mahāvihāra-vāsin reject the Mahāyāna and practice the Hīnayāna, while the Abhayagiri-vihāra-vāsin study both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna teachings and propagate the *Tripiṭaka*" (*T* 51:934b). Thus Hsüan-tsang probably called the Abhayagiri-vihāra-vāsin a Mahāyāna-Theravāda group because they followed some Mahāyāna teachings while relying primarily on Theravāda teachings.

By the time of Hsüan-tsang, Indian Buddhism was already beginning

to decline. Hsüan-tsang described the general state of Buddhism at Gandhāra when he wrote that its *stūpas* were largely "overgrown ruins." Also, "although there were over one thousand monasteries, they were dilapidated and deserted ruins, overgrown with weeds. There were also many temples belonging to non-Buddhist religions" (T 51:879c). His description reveals further that Hinduism was gradually gaining in strength.

Although the Sarvāstivādin School had been the strongest school of Nikāya Buddhism, by Hsüan-tsang's time the Sammatīya School had become the most influential. For example, inscriptions from Sārnāth reveal that although the monastery at the Deer Park had belonged to the Sarvāstivādin School during the Kuṣāṇa dynasty, by the fourth century it was controlled by the Sammatīya School. One of the main reasons for this change may have been that the Sammatīya School's affirmation of a "person" (*pudgala*) was closer to the Hindu doctrine of Self (*ātman*) than it was to the *dharma* theory of the Sarvāstivādin School.

When I-ching traveled to India in 671, he spent most of his time studying at the great Buddhist university at Nālandā. According to his travel diary, *Nan-hai chi-kuei nei-fa chuan* (T 2125, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practiced in India and the Malay Archipelago*), the distinction between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna monks was not very clear. Both observed the 250 "Hīnayāna" precepts and practiced in accordance with the Four Noble Truths. Those who read Mahāyāna texts and worshipped bodhisattvas were Mahāyānists, while those who did not do either were Hīnayānists (T 54:205c). Among the Mahāyānists, only the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra schools were mentioned. I-ching generally emphasized the way Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna practices were mixed.

I-ching described Hīnayāna Buddhism as being dominated by the Mahāsaṅghika, Theravāda, Mūlasarvāstivādin, and Sammatīya schools. In Magadha all four schools were practiced, although the Sarvāstivādin School was particularly strong. In Sindh and Lo-ch'a (Sanskrit name unknown) in western India, the Sammatīya School was dominant, although the other three were present to a lesser extent. In southern India, the Theravāda School was powerful and the other schools had only a minor presence. Sri Lanka was completely dominated by the Theravāda School, and the Mahāsaṅghika School had withdrawn from the island. In eastern India, all four schools were present. Southeast Asia was dominated by the Mūlasarvāstivādin School, with the Sammatīya School maintaining a small presence. Only Mo-lo-yu (the Malay peninsula?) exhibited Mahāyāna influence.

The travel records cited above indicate that Indian Buddhism in the sixth and seventh centuries was dominated by the Sarvāstivādin, Sam-

matīya, and Theravāda schools. When Hsüan-tsang visited India, he noted the existence of Sarvāstivādin, but made no mention of the Mūlasarvāstivādin. Fifty years later, I-ching noted the existence of the Mūlasarvāstivādin, but did not mention the Sarvāstivādin. The term "Mūlasarvāstivādin" occurs primarily in sources from the Tibetan tradition, such as the works of Bhavya and Tāranātha and the *Mahāvīryūtpatti*. The differences between the two terms and the reasons they came to be used are not completely clear. However, the distinction was probably made when the Sarvāstivādin School in central India dramatized its differences with the school in Kashmir by calling itself the Mūlasarvāstivādin School.

Sarvāstivādin teachings are said to have been passed along a lineage consisting of Mahākāśyapa, Ānanda, Śāṇakavāsī, Upagupta, and so forth. Both Śāṇakavāsī and Upagupta lived in Mathurā. Upagupta received King Aśoka's patronage; Madhyāntika, an able disciple of Śāṇakavāsī, established the school in Kashmir. However, Madhyāntika was not listed in the lineages of the school. For example, a biography of Aśoka (*A-yü-wang chuan*; T 50:121a, 126a) includes the following lineage: Mahākāśyapa, Ānanda, Śāṇakavāsī, Upagupta, and Dhītika. The same lineage is found in the fortieth fascicle of the *Ken-pen-shuo-i-ch'ieh-yu-pu p'i-na-yeh tsa-shih* (T 24:411b), a work containing miscellaneous information on the Mūlasarvāstivādin *vinaya*, indicating that the lineage was accepted by the Mūlasarvāstivādins. In contrast, in another work on Aśoka, the seventh fascicle of the *A-yü-wang ching* (T 50:152c), the following lineage was included: Mahākāśyapa, Ānanda, Madhyāntika, Śāṇakavāsī, and Upagupta. Madhyāntika was probably inserted in the lineage at the insistence of the Sarvāstivādins of Kashmir. The central Indian Sarvāstivādins did not accept the lineage, however. Later, when the power of the Kashmir school declined, the central Indian school asserted its claims to preeminence by calling itself the Mūlasarvāstivādin School.

The Theravāda Tradition of Sri Lanka

The island of Sri Lanka, off the southern tip of India, has an area of approximately 25,000 square miles and a population of thirteen million people. In the past, it has been called Tambapaṇṇī, Siṃhala, Laṅkā-dīpa, and Ceylon. Theravāda Buddhism is practiced by many of the inhabitants, a tradition that is also followed in Thailand, Burma, Laos, and Cambodia.

Buddhism was first brought to Sri Lanka by Aśoka's son Mahinda,

four other monks, and Mahinda's servants. The king of Sri Lanka, Devānampiya Tissa, had a temple constructed in the capital city of Anurādhapura for Mahinda and his followers to practice in. The temple was later called the Mahāvihāra and became the base for the Mahāvihāravāsin sect in Sri Lanka. The Cetiyapabbatavihāra monastery was built in Mihintalē, the port at which Mahinda had arrived. Mahinda's younger sister, the nun Saṅghamittā, also went to Sri Lanka. She brought a cutting from the *bodhi*-tree and established the order of nuns on the island. Buddhism subsequently flourished on Sri Lanka, with many monks and nuns joining the order and with imperial support contributing to the construction of monasteries.

The construction of the Abhayagiri-vihāra in the first century B.C.E. is especially noteworthy, since this monastery became the base for a second major sect of Theravāda Buddhism in Sri Lanka. The struggle between the monks of the Abhayagiri-vihāra and the monks of the Mahāvihāra continued to influence Sri Lankan religious history for the next several centuries. In 44 B.C.E., Vaṭṭagāmaṇi Abhaya became king of Sri Lanka; however, he was forced to flee shortly thereafter by the Tamils. Fifteen years later he regained the throne and ruled for twelve years (29–17 B.C.E.). In 29 B.C.E. he had the Abhayagiri monastery built and presented it to the elder Mahātissa—whom the Mahāvihāra monks had previously expelled from their monastery. When Mahātissa went to reside in the Abhayagiri monastery, he was accompanied by a number of monks from the Mahāvihāra, thus leading to a split between the two groups.

During the reign of Vaṭṭagāmaṇi Abhaya, the Buddhist canon, which had traditionally been transmitted through memorization and recitation, was finally written down. Five hundred monks from the Mahāvihāra sect participated in the copying sessions. They did not receive any assistance from the king since he supported the Abhayagiri sect. The monks would recite the works they had memorized and other monks would then verify their accuracy. Next, the recitations were edited and written down. At this time, the canon consisted of the *Tripiṭaka* (*sutra*, *vinaya*, and *abhidharma*) and commentaries. The decision to put the canon into written form was a major step in arriving at a definite formulation of its contents.

Meanwhile, the Abhayagiri sect had welcomed an elder of the Vajjiputtaka School in India named Dhammaruci and his disciples to their monastery. The Abhayagiri sect is consequently sometimes known as the Dhammaruci sect. During subsequent years, the Abhayagiri sect maintained close relations with Indian Buddhists and adopted many new teachings from India. In contrast, the Mahāvihāra sect has care-

fully maintained the Vibhajjavāda tradition of Theravāda Buddhism until the present day.

During the reign of Vohārika Tissa (269-291), a number of Indian adherents of the Vetullavāda sect of Mahāyāna Buddhism came to Sri Lanka and were allowed to stay at the Abhayagiri-vihāra by the monks; but the king quickly expelled the Indian monks from Sri Lanka. The Vetullavāda monks later reasserted their influence at the Abhayagiri-vihāra. In protest, a group of monks from Abhayagiri left the monastery and established a third sect at Dakkhiṇāgiri during the reign of Goṭhābhaya (309-322). This group, known as the Sāgaliya sect, was associated with the Jetavana monastery. King Goṭhābhaya had sixty of the Vetullavāda monks arrested, expelled from the order, and deported to India. Later, King Mahāsena (r. 334-361) suppressed the Mahāvihāra sect, which then entered a long period of decline. The Abhayagiri sect, in contrast, prospered. During the reign of Siri Meghavanna (362-409) a relic of the Buddha, one of his teeth, was brought to Sri Lanka from Kalinga in India and enshrined in the Abhayagiri monastery.

In the fifth century during the reign of Mahānāma (409-431), the great commentator Buddhaghosa came to Sri Lanka. He lived at the Mahāvihāra monastery, where he wrote commentaries on the *Tripitaka* and general expositions on Buddhist doctrine and practice. According to the *Cūlavamsa* (37:215-246), Buddhaghosa was a Brahman who had come from the vicinity where the Buddha had attained enlightenment in central India. According to Burmese sources, he was a native of Thaton, Burma, who traveled to Sri Lanka 943 years after the Buddha's death in the reign of King Mahānāma. Recent scholarship has revealed that Buddhaghosa was probably a native of South India. Whatever the case may be, it is certain that Buddhaghosa did come to Sri Lanka from a foreign country, resided at the Mahāvihāra, and supported the Mahāvihāra tradition. In addition, he wrote the *Visuddhimagga* (Path of Purification) and a series of detailed commentaries on the Buddhist canon based on older works in the Theravāda tradition. According to some sources, he translated the old Sinhalese commentaries into Pāli. After he completed his writings, he returned to his native country. Buddhaghosa's formulation of Theravāda doctrines has remained the standard one until the present time.

The rivalry between the Mahāvihāra and Abhayagiri sects continued through the centuries. In general, more rulers seem to have supported the Abhayagiri sect. The Mahāvihāra sect, however, successfully endured its many hardships and preserved a purer form of Theravāda doctrine and monastic discipline. During the first half of the eighth century, Mahāyāna and Esoteric Buddhism were practiced in Sri Lanka.

Two of the monks responsible for promulgating Esoteric Buddhism in China, Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra, visited the island.

In the first half of the eleventh century during the reign of Mahinda V, when Sri Lanka was invaded by the Śaivite Chola dynasty of South India, the capital city and the Buddhist monasteries were reduced to ruins. After a half century of fighting, the Sri Lankan king Vijayabāhu I (1059–1113) forced the Cholas to leave the island, restored the monarchy, and invited Buddhist elders from Burma to restore Buddhism in Sri Lanka.

In the twelfth century, King Parakkamabāhu I (1153–1186) defrocked the decadent monks in the Mahāvihāra, Abhayagiri, and Jetavana sects and purified the Buddhist orders in Sri Lanka. The orthodox Theravāda Buddhism of the Mahāvihāra sect subsequently received government support, and the Abhayagiri sect was completely banned, never to regain influence. This marked the end of the ten centuries of rivalry between the sects. The Mahāvihāra sect and its orthodox Theravāda tradition have continued to dominate Sri Lankan Buddhism until the present day.

In subsequent centuries, the island was invaded by the Cholas, Portuguese, Dutch, and British. In the eighteenth century, King Kittisiri Rājasimha invited ten monks from Thailand to help restore the Buddhist order. Afterward, Southeast Asian monks were periodically invited to Sri Lanka to strengthen the order. Today Sri Lankan Buddhism is divided into a number of fraternities tracing their origins to these missions from Southeast Asia. The major fraternities are the Siyam, Kalyāṇi, Amarapura, and Rāmañña.